

# The Tuolumne Rancheria

A water story.

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# **Spoiler Alert....**

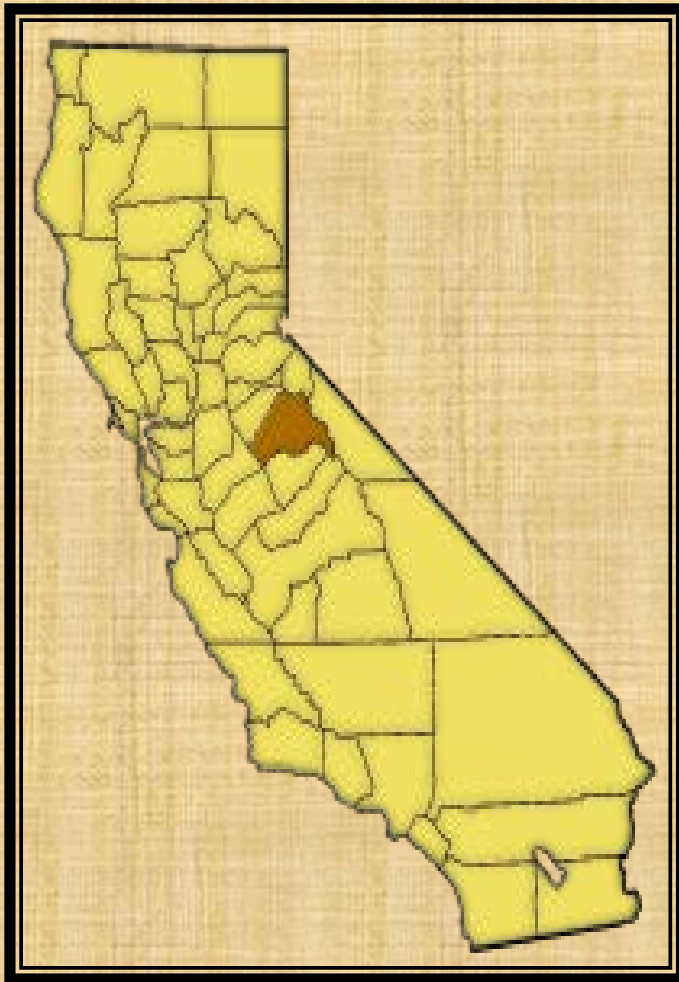
The Tribe has no adjudicated water rights...  
...BUT, neither does Tuolumne County.

There is little chance that the Tribe or the county will be able to secure adjudicated water rights on their own...  
...solving these problems will require working together.

**We have the same needs...the same goals.**

**When partnerships are forged,  
possibilities are endless.**

# Tuolumne County, the Rancheria and the Watershed

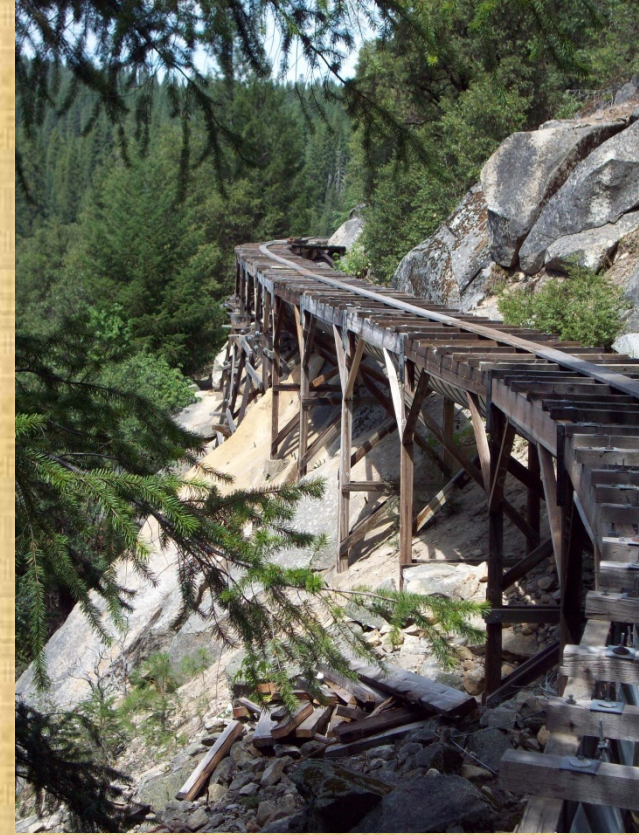
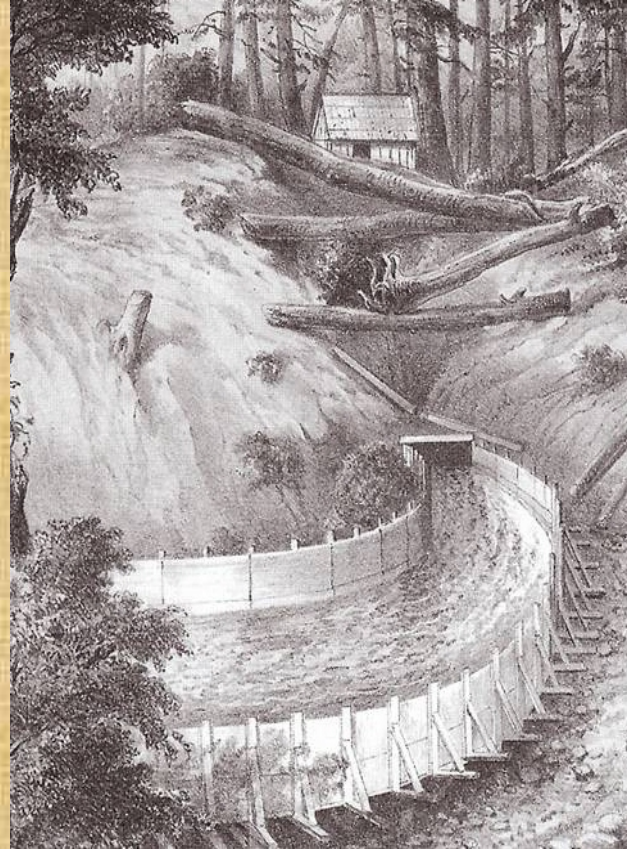
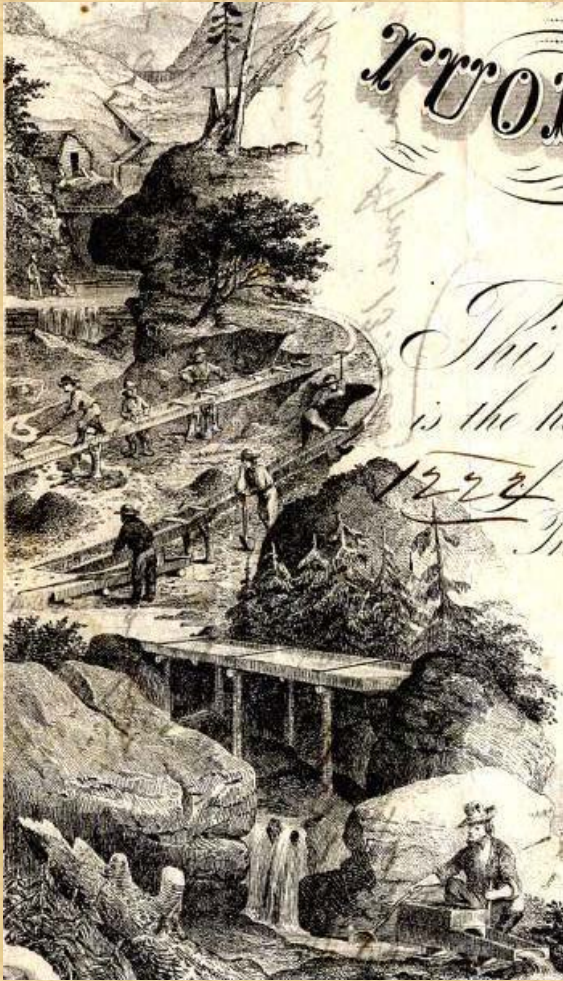


# How did we come to have no rights to our water?

- 1849 - Gold Rush
  - Miners establish individual “water companies” in order to file water rights claims
- 1910 - Tuolumne Rancheria established
- 1920's – 1950's waves of dams built in Tuolumne County: funded almost entirely by downstream users
  - Hetch Hetchy, New Melones, Don Pedro
  - Purpose of the dams was solely hydroelectric and irrigation: NO CONSUMPTIVE USE
  - PG&E begins buying old miners water claims
- 1960's-80's Tuolumne County grows as do external water demands
  - Central valley project, agriculture, etc.
  - PG&E's mission statement changes from hydroelectric to supply
- 1971- Tribe gets first water & septic services
- 1980's- PG&E retains ownership of water rights in Tuolumne County
  - PG&E sells water infrastructure (not water rights) to Tuolumne County Water Agency for \$1



# Evolution of the ditch





# TUD's Water Service

TUD inherited and/or purchased water infrastructure that was

- Poorly planned
- Old and dilapidated
- Not meeting new standards

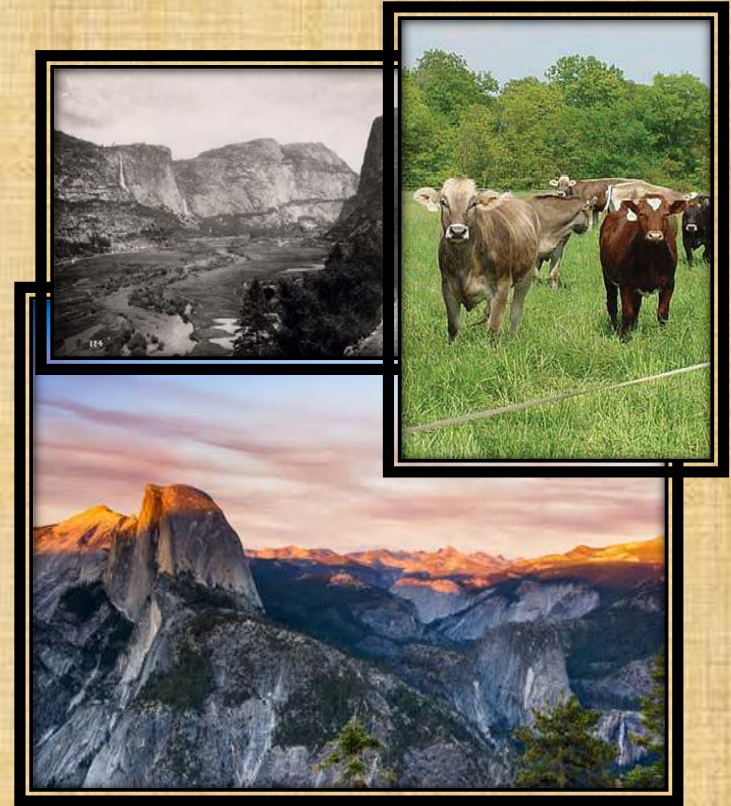
they currently manage:

- 14,000 water connections
- 14 treatment plants
- maintain 330 miles of pipeline & over 70 miles of historic ditch system

**This is a lot of work for one community utility!**  
**Minimal guarantees to water supply!**

# Effect of Land Use on Watershed Health

- Upstream: National Forest and Parks
  - High risk of wildfire
  - Reduced meadow storage capacity
- Mid way: Tuolumne Rancheria, residential development
  - Communities reliant on aging septic systems: NO SEWER!
  - Vacation homes converted to permanent residences
  - Vulnerable ditch system
- Downstream: Residential, commercial, & agricultural
  - Major shortage for water storage capacity
  - Poor surface water quality



**Everyone has problems, right?**

Our infrastructure is vulnerable,  
we have no adjudicated water rights,  
no money, and  
upstream conditions are getting worse.

**So, what do we do?**



# We work together.



# Working together: with whom?

- USFS – Yosemite National Park/Stansislaus National Forest
- Tuolumne/Calaveras County
- USDA-NRCS
- Local Community Service Districts
- NGO's – Sierra Club, Audubon Society
- DWR TAC network
- Region 9 RTOC network
- Everyone here today...



# Working together: how?

- DWR Tribal Advisory Committee
- Local land use collaborative (Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions)
- EPA Region 9 RTOC
- IRWMP

# Working together: why?

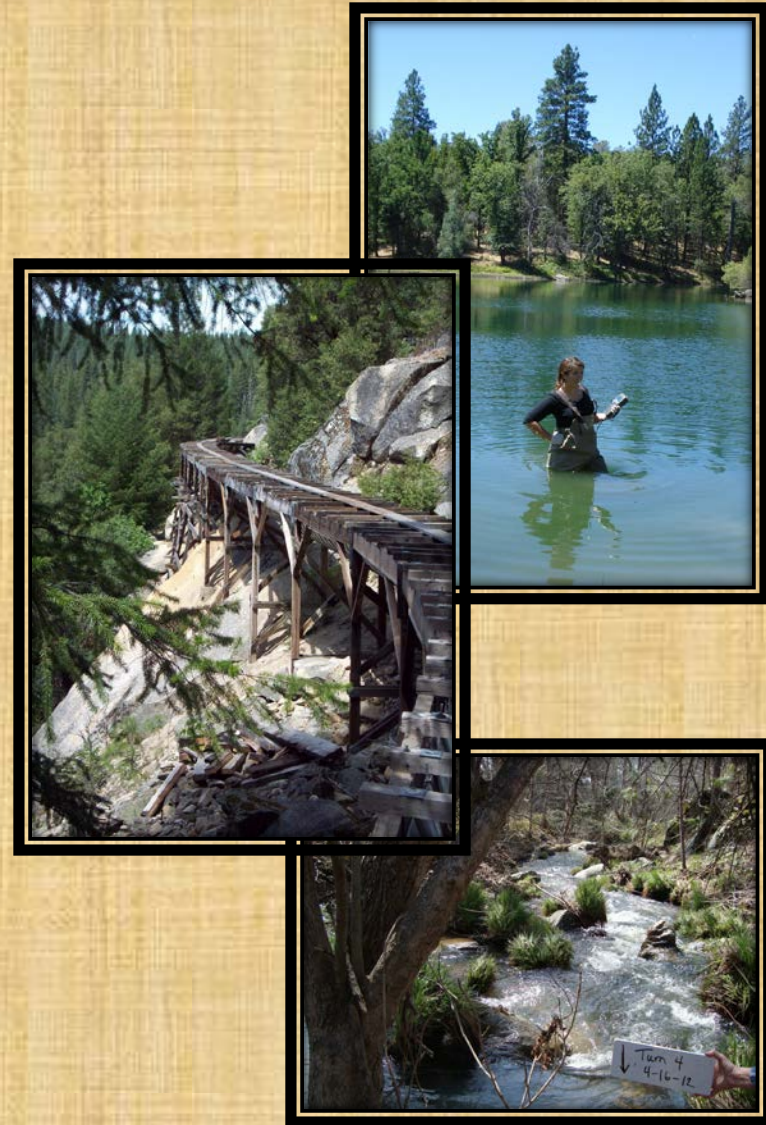
- Education and Outreach
- Breakdown Barriers
- Exchange Ideas
- Trust Building
- Leap of Faith

**Remember: We have the same needs...  
the same goals.**



# Vision for the Future

- Adequate water supply for current and future
- Financially sustainable
- Build partnership opportunities for multiple benefits and beneficial uses
- Resolve water conflicts
- Maximize regional benefits
- Continue to educate
- Tuolumne - Stanislaus IRWM







Thank you.

p.s. a special thanks to Sonny Hendricks for his  
continued guidance and support.